

# How to Gain Weight

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For more ideas,  
see Handout –  
Cooking for  
One or Two

## **Eat often**

- Eat small, nutritious meals often; try five small meal-snacks a day.
- Set an alarm to remind yourself to eat.
- Have a full meal at the time of day when your appetite is best.
- Have a snack before you go to bed at night.
- Keep nutritious, high calorie snacks where you can see them and reach them easily.

## **Slowly increase your food**

- It will take your body some time to get used to the extra food. Slowly increase how often and how much you eat. There are a lot of ideas in this handout, try a couple every few days. On different days you will want different foods. After some time, you may be able to eat a high calorie meal as shown on the last page.

## **Eat what you like**

- Have lots of your favourite foods around and eat these whenever you want. If meat and potatoes does not appeal to you at supper, try a bowl of hot cereal topped with fruit, nuts and cream.



### **Don't fill up on low-calorie foods**

- Limit plain coffee, tea, clear soup, diet drinks or raw, bulky vegetables. These fill you up but don't give you the calories that you need.

### **If you get tired easily, use quick and easy foods**

- Buy ready-to-eat meals and foods such as TV dinners (not the light brands). Try pre-cooked foods from the deli or salad bars at the grocery store.
- Buy "instant" cereals, soups, hot cocoa package mixes, noodle and rice mixes to which you just add hot water.
- Order food by phone and have it delivered.
- Cook meals in advance and freeze them in single portions.

### **Choose high-calorie foods**

#### **Fats are high in calories**

- Add butter, margarine, mayonnaise, salad dressing, cream cheese, oil, gravy, sour cream, cool whip, whipping cream and cream sauces to recipes and foods.
- Fry or deep-fry foods in fat for extra calories.

### **Eat high-fat foods**

- Buy regular, not “light” products.
- Meats that are high in fat include bacon, sausages, luncheon meats and spareribs.
- Drink whole milk with meals or as a snack. Try condensed milk and evaporated whole milk. Chocolate or strawberry milk, hot cocoa and instant breakfast mixes are good too. In cooking and in soup, use whole milk or cream (or try canned coconut milk). Use cream on cereal and in coffee and tea, and on desserts. Top pancakes with whipped cream.

### **Have protein at every meal**

- Protein includes cheese, eggs, poultry, fish, meat, peanut butter, nuts, brown beans and lentils.
- If your appetite for meat is poor, serve it cold and sliced.
- Try cold sliced turkey on buttered bread or crackers, cheese chunks in salads, or peanut butter on apple slices.
- Add canned white beans or kidney beans to soup or casseroles.
- Chopped boiled egg can be added to casseroles or salads. Add an extra 1 or 2 eggs when making pancakes, cakes or muffins.
- Swirl a beaten egg into soup or into macaroni and cheese while it is cooking.
- Add grated cheese to soups, tacos, lasagna and ravioli.
- Add milk powder to soups, stews, casseroles, mashed potatoes, cereals and scrambled eggs. Or add a package of unflavoured gelatin into your soup, juice or milk.

### **Sugar**

- Add sugar, honey or jam to your drinks and foods.
- Try adding non-alcoholic drink mixes such as pina colada to ice-cream or milk shakes.

### **Snacks**

- Try cheese and crackers, raisin toast with margarine or peanut butter, raisins and dried fruit, peanuts, sunflower seeds, almonds, “trail mix”, granola, olives, avocado pear, coconut, hard-cooked eggs, sandwiches, milk shakes or sweetened juice.
- Dip fruits in a mixture of sour cream and honey.

### **Desserts**

- Choose ice cream, frozen yogourt, regular fruit yogourt, cheese with fruit, custards and puddings. To these desserts add chocolate chips, coconut, nuts, granola or cream.
- Foods as shown in Canada’s Food Guide to Healthy Eating should always be the main part of your meals, but you can also have some high calorie desserts and sweets such as cakes, cookies, pies, donuts, chocolates, candies and soft drinks.

## Make high calorie drinks

### High Protein Milk (fortified milk)

- Add 1 cup of skim milk powder to every litre of whole milk. Mix well. You may also want to add one teaspoon of vanilla to every litre, for flavour.

### Hot Chocolate

- Mix 2 tablespoons of chocolate syrup with 1 tablespoon of peanut butter, and stir in 1 cup of whole milk. Microwave for one minute or until hot. Top with a squirt of whipped cream.

### Fruit Milkshake

- In a blender mix 1 cup of whole milk, 1/4 cup of milk powder, 1/2 cup of canned or fresh fruit and a scoop of ice cream. Top with whipped cream.

### Buy high calorie drinks

- For example: Ensure, Boost, Resource or Sustacal are canned drinks that can be bought at drugstores and some grocery stores. Special products such as Resource Diabetic or Glucerna (for diabetes) or Pulmocare (for emphysema) may need to be ordered in by your pharmacist. These drinks are high in calories and have added vitamins and minerals.
- Add Instant Breakfast mix to your milk.
- As well as canned drinks, you can buy sugar and protein powders that you add to your foods for extra calories. Try other high-calorie foods that have vitamins added such as puddings, soups and bars.
- These bought drinks and foods are handy, but they do cost more than homemade kinds.

### Eat out

- “Eat out” at a senior centre or restaurant.

### Vitamin and mineral pills

- A “one-a-day” vitamin and mineral pill for a period of time may be good for you if you have lost a lot of weight or if you are not eating enough food. Talk to your doctor or pharmacist before starting to use any vitamin pills, mineral pills or herbal products.

## High Calorie Meal Plan

### Breakfast

- Juice or dish of prunes
- Hot cereal with fortified whole milk or cream, topped with 1 teaspoon of margarine and brown sugar and granola

### Mid-morning snack

- Buttered raisin toast with peanut butter, an egg, or jam
- Fortified whole milk

### Lunch

- Cream soup — made with fortified whole milk or cream, and topped with cheese (grated or sliced)
- Crackers spread with margarine or butter
- Open-face sandwich; spread with lots of margarine, butter or mayonnaise; cheese or meat and one slice of tomato
- Sweetened applesauce thickened with cream

### Mid-afternoon snack

- Milkshake or can of Ensure/Boost

### Dinner

- Meat and vegetable casserole with added skim milk powder
- Mashed potato made with cream and margarine, or 1 slice of bread with margarine or butter
- Avocado slices (try it plain or with a sprinkle of lemon juice) or several olives
- Pudding or custard topped with whipped cream and/or nuts

**Note:** when making a pudding, you can use an instant pudding mix and add 2 cups whole milk plus 3/4 cup of skim milk powder and 2 tablespoons of oil.

### Evening Snack

- Slice of cheese with snack crackers or nuts or granola bar
- Fortified whole milk or sweetened juice
- Coffee and tea are optional; try to include 6-8 glasses of water or other fluid during the day